

4474. l v

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE

CHURCH of St. MARY MAGDALEN, TAUNTON,

On FRIDAY, the 19th. of APRIL, 1793,

(BEING THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A GENERAL FAST.)

By the Rev. JOHN GARDINER,

CURATE TO THE ABOVE CHURCH, AND RECTOR OF BRAILSFORD, &c.
IN THE COUNTY OF DERBY.

Printed by J. POOLE, and sold by Him, and E. and S. HASSUMS, TAUNTON;
by R. CRUTWELL, BATH; and by J. STOCKDALE, Piccadilly; W. RICHARDSON,
Royal Exchange; and by J. DOWNES, 240, Fleet-Street, near Temple-Bar, LONDON.

1793.

[Price Two Shillings.]



TO
THE HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND
FATHER IN GOD

J A M E S,

LORD BISHOP OF LITCHFIELD AND COVENTRY.

MY LORD,

IN taking the liberty to inscribe to your Lordship the following Discourse, I am influenced by no Motive, but that of requesting—that amidst the universal sentiments of Veneration and Esteem, with which the Clergy of the Diocese look up to your Lordship, you will not regard as the most backward in expressing the same, although, perhaps, the most distant in point of situation,

Your Lordship's most Dutiful

And Devoted Humble Servant,

JOHN GARDINER.

TAUNTON, APRIL 27th. 1793.

THE HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

FATHER IN GOD

LOUIS BISHOP OF LITCHFIELD AND COVENTRY

My Lord

I am writing the liberty to inform you that the following Diocese, I am informed, is no longer in the hands of the Bishop of the Diocese of Litchfield and Coventry, which the Clergy of the Diocese look up to you for support. You will not regard as a most awkward in executing the same, although perhaps the most distant in point of situation.

Your Lordship's most Obedient

and devoted Servant

HENRY CALDWELL

Secretary to the Bishop

A

S E R M O N, &c.

NEHEMIAH, IV. 14.

AND I LOOKED, AND ROSE UP AND SAID UNTO THE NOBLES,
AND TO THE RULERS, AND TO THE REST OF THE PEOPLE, BE
NOT YE AFRAID OF THEM; REMEMBER THE LORD, WHICH IS
GREAT AND TERRIBLE, AND FIGHT FOR YOUR BRETHREN,
YOUR SONS, AND YOUR DAUGHTERS, YOUR WIVES, AND YOUR
HOUSES.

AN exhortation like this, so vehement and pathetic, could not
but be dictated by some very urgent and extraordinary occasion.
Accordingly we find, that *Nehemiah, grieving at the thought of the
Walls of the City of Jerusalem being broken down, and the Gates thereof
being consumed with Fire*, was inspired with the laudable design of
rebuilding them, and thus restoring the honour of his Country. Suit-
able measures being adopted, and a proper number of Attendants
secured, he embarked with alacrity in the execution of his design.

B

But

But no sooner was this known to the neighbouring People, (who were jealous of the rising prosperity of the Jews, and which they foresaw this enterprize would still tend to promote) than they resolved on adding stratagem to force, to counteract it. Not daring to put the trial of their strength to the issue of an open battle, their plan was to secrete themselves, and rushing suddenly from a place of ambush, to surprise and put to death all those engaged in the work. *Nehemiah* was in due time apprised of their intended plot, and took every necessary precaution to guard against it. He made the most advantageous disposition of his Followers, furnished them with a sufficient number and variety of arms, and collecting *the Nobles, the Rulers and rest of the People*, with a noble disdain for the perfidious views of the enemy, addressed them in these animating words; *Be not ye afraid of them; remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your Brethren, your Sons, and your Daughters, your Wives, and your Houses.* VI. HAIMAN

My Brethren, the situation in which *Nehemiah* was placed, and his conduct and sentiments in consequence of it, are too obvious in their application, I am confident, to escape your notice. Our old and inveterate Foes, (whom to combat openly has always afforded distinctions highly honourable to the British Name), have sought to accomplish by artifice and treachery what they despaired of effecting by other means. In order to conquer, they have tried to divide—In order to humble and undermine us, they have endeavoured to blow up the flame of civil discord and contention. They have disseminated the most pernicious principles, and held forth the most alluring temptations, with a view to corrupt and alienate the public Mind. Thanks be to God, however, such efforts have been attended with the success they deserved—the disappointment and confusion of their Authors. *The Wicked dug a pit for others, but have fallen into the midst of it*

it themselves—the snare is broken, and by the blessing of Providence, with well-timed exertions of our own, *we are delivered*. But though the nefarious views of the enemy in this respect have been frustrated, it does not appear that their animosity is extinguished. The seeds of an ancient and deep-rooted Rivalship are still strong enough to send forth fruit. From the manœuvres of secret Conspiracy they have proceeded to acts of open Hostility, and we are now assembled by supreme Command, to humble ourselves in the presence of Almighty God, and implore his protection on those arms which we are compelled to take up in our defence—in defence of our rights, privileges and every thing we hold dear. Thus circumstanced, shall we not at the approach of danger, adopt proper precautions, and assume a spirit of firmness and intrepidity, like that of *Nehemiah*? Shall not every good Citizen, however limited in ability or obscure in situation, exert himself to the utmost in repelling so unprovoked an attack? In particular, shall not the Ecclesiastical co-operating with the Civil Establishment, contribute its aid, however feeble it may be, to the general good? Shall not Ministers of the Gospel endeavour to point out to their Hearers their true interests, and exhort them to persevere with unanimity and vigour in a Contest, on the issue of which the salvation of these interests must ultimately depend?

The Events which have preceded the Solemnity of this Day are as interesting and important in their nature, as they are various and extraordinary in their degree. Whether we confine our views to our own Country, or direct them to the miserable and distracted state of a neighbouring Kingdom, we shall find ample subjects for our speculation, our instruction, and our compassion. The Philosopher, the Politician and Philanthropist have an extensive scope for the indulgence of their feelings, and the exercise of their talents.

I. Did

I. Did the limits of a Discourse permit me to go through the different stages of the History of this Nation—to point out the progressive steps of our Liberty, and the immense expence of treasure and blood with which it has been purchased—we should admire, and with gratitude, the goodly Edifice, raised to such an unparalleled degree of strength and eminence, which protects us—We should awaken to a lively sense of those inestimable blessings, which, by inheriting from our birth, and by growing familiar to us from habit, we now, perhaps, hardly ever bestow a thought on, unless roused by some sudden emergency.

There was a period, My Brethren, when our Ancestors, like other uncivilized Tribes, groaned under the yoke of Despotism. Slavery and Superstition pervaded the whole of Society. It was not till after repeated struggles, after ignominious defeats and triumphant victories—the People sometimes trespassing on the power of the Prince, the Prince trampling on the rights of the People—it was not, I say, till after Catastrophes the most melancholy and alarming, that the latter gained the ascendancy, and established the security of Civil and Religious Freedom.

The Concessions obtained from a pusillanimous Sovereign, comprehended under the emphatick Title of *Magna Charta*, were undoubtedly highly to be valued—but still they were insufficient and incomplete. This celebrated Deed, called the Bulwark of English Liberty, conferred, it is true, new privileges and immunities on certain Individuals; the Barons, the Clergy and principal Merchants—that is, on those who before participated in the regal power; but the great Bulk of Mankind, the inferior Orders of Society, were still in a state of vassalage, subject to various grievances, and could claim but little or no protection from the Law. It was not till towards the close of the last Century, at the glorious Revolution, that stipulations were made, and

a form of Government was defined, which had for its object the liberty and independence of the whole Body of the People. Enabled to chuse their own Prince, they wisely prescribed their own terms. They had their rights properly investigated and ascertained, their privileges fully established. At this grand Epoch, a Work, the fruit of wisdom and maturing age, received its completion. The various powers of the complicated Machine were duly balanced, so as to give energy and stability to the Whole. The King, Lords and Commons have ever since kept a watchful and jealous eye over the encroachments of each other—and have mutually co-operated towards the liberty and safety of the Subject, and the prosperity and aggrandisement of the State.

It is this System of mixed Government, My Brethren, peculiar to this highly favoured Isle, that dispenses the most solid advantages around us—to enter into a short detail of which may not, I hope, at this crisis, be an unpleasant or unprofitable task. Our Persons, free from molestation and controul, are subject to no grievance nor oppression, can receive no injury nor insult, but for which the Law provides redress. No forcible detention or imprisonment of them can be authorised, but what the benefit of Society demands to satisfy the just claims of honest Creditors. No violent death, exile, nor corporal punishment can be inflicted—but what is sanctioned by the decision of our Equals—and that, after the most clear and positive evidence, delivered in the face of the whole World, and proving that from a violation of the Laws of our Country, we have forfeited all claim to their protection. Further, No boundaries are assigned to those talents and endowments of the Mind which Nature has given us, but what Nature herself has set. The Road to Dignities and Preferments is alike open to all. Ambition is never checked in its Career—and every day we see Persons of ignoble origin, by the splendour of their genius and eminence of their virtues, occupy the most honourable and most lucrative Offices of State.

C

Our

Our Property, of every description, whether belonging to the Meanest or most Opulent, is equally guarded against the lust of Ambition, the rapacity of Avarice, and the artifices of Fraud. The Poor Man's Cottage is as much to him a Castle of defence as the Nobleman's Palace. He has, it is true, no fortification or intrenchment—but his security consists in a knowledge of the general Will—he knows that every Neighbour is pledged to be his Guard ; whose interest it becomes to watch the slightest approach of danger, and fly to his protection. Nothing can be taken from us by force or surprise—no sudden or arbitrary Levies can be raised—even the necessary Supplies and Exigencies of the State are not demanded, but given—and given in such proportion and for such purposes only, as We by our Representatives shall appoint.

Further, our Sentiments and Opinions may be circulated freely, and without disguise—so that the faculties of the Soul may be said to be as exempt from Slavery as those of the Body. Political and Theological Disquisitions are allowed in all their variety—No restraint is put on them, but what the safety and very existence of the State demand. It is the licentiousness, and not the liberty of the Press that is forbidden—and in case of any doubt arising where to decide between the two, the former is rather given way to than that the latter should be infringed on. Indulged in the free exercise of our Religion, we may appropriate what places and adopt what forms we think proper for the worship of the Deity. We may use every Argument we please, to propagate and encourage our favourite Systems. The most pernicious Heresies—Doctrines the most inimical to the established Church, may without hindrance be diffused—even the Bulwarks of Christianity may be attacked, Converts made against it—and to all this no force can be opposed, but that of argument—the Civil Power has no right to interfere*—its province is confined solely to check the

*A few old Statutes inflicting Penalties on those who write against the Trinity, confessedly obsolete, and never known to be enforced in the memory of any Man living, will hardly be produced as an exception to this general position.

the efforts of Sedition and Treason—that is, to counteract those means which are employed to deprive us of all the Advantages before enumerated. If it be objected that certain Tests are required in Matters of Faith which operate as Restrictions on a part of the Community—I answer, that these Restrictions (like all our other Laws) are salutary—such as expedience justifies, to guard against the universal prevalence of Libertinism and Infidelity. If Religion had not the sanction and support of the Civil Magistrate, or if no Provision was made by Law for its Ministers—is it not to be feared that soon all Religion would be entirely banished the Earth; or that its Ministers would be degraded among the most servile and most ignorant part of Mankind?—Nay, what I state merely as an apprehension, does not the recent Example of France but too fatally prove to be an almost absolute Certainty?

Thus, My Brethren, I have endeavoured to give you a plain, artless, but I allow, superficial account of what we call our Civil and Religious Freedom. If we have no Constitution (as a wild and eccentric Theorist has had the audacity to assert—but is it worth while to dispute about abstract Terms, or contend merely for a Name?)—If, I say, we have no Constitution—the most Ignorant among us must know, and the most Obdurate must feel—that we enjoy Blessings, such as no other Government ever yet conferred on Mankind. We may well apply to Ourselves this exclamation of the Jewish Legislator, *What Nation is there so great, that hath Statutes and Judgments so righteous?* This Government derives not its superiority from speculative Reasonings, or plausible Assertions—it is grounded on the basis of Experience—its advantages are demonstrated by their effects—effects which come home to every Man's own bosom. O, then, Shall we not, *pray for the peace* and endeavour to promote the prosperity of *this our Jerusalem?* Shall we not esteem the Blessings it confers
on

on us as we ought—defend them as they deserve? Shall we not engrave them indelibly on our Minds, and lift up our Hearts with gratitude to the Dispenser of them? But to discover these Blessings still more sensibly, let us transport ourselves to a neighbouring Kingdom, and view the effects of another System, which some have been rash and presumptuous enough to recommend in preference to our own.

II. From the History of both Countries we learn, that in the early periods of Society, the Governments of *England and France* were nearly similar. Indeed the Feudal System, a System of tyranny and oppression, at one time universally prevailed throughout Europe. But when Mankind began to emerge from the bosom of ignorance and darkness in which they were enveloped, and to have a faint glimmering of their just Rights and Interests, it was not surprising that a sense of their destination and power should impel them to revolt and throw off the yoke under which they had so long groaned. When the Storms raised by these efforts of emancipation had subsided, a progress in civilization took place; and different forms of Government were adopted, just as various contingencies, local or incidental, might occasion. Whether from the good fortune of our Insular Situation—or from a natural obstinacy and manly spirit of resistance derived from the influence of Climate—or from the frequent interruption of the succession in the Monarchical Line, which tended to lessen the veneration of the People for the power of Kings—Whether from any one of these Causes, from all of them combined, or other adventitious ones, which it is not my province here to investigate—the fact, however, is certain, that our approaches to liberty were more rapid, more vigorous and steady than those of the French Nation. Like us, it is true, they shook off the chains of Feudal Tyranny, but the power wrested from the Nobles was transferred to the King; so that Despotism with them had only changed Masters. The Prerogative of the Crown extended, did not add to the Privileges of the

the People. And though they must have beheld with an eye of envy the situation of us more fortunate Islanders, no attempts were made to emulate us in this respect and emancipate themselves from the Yoke of Oppression, at least, for a long series of Years they submitted patiently to the decrees of Monarchs subject but to little controul.

A few years since, however, we were Witnesses of a change highly advantageous to them, and which brought them nearer our admirable System. The Season for a Revolution was arrived, and it was effected by means so extraordinary, and in a manner so unprecedented, as to astonish the whole World. On the first report of such a change, it was treated as a kind of Chimera more calculated to amuse, than to obtain belief—but when found to be real, the voice of universal Sympathy was raised—Congratulations were preparing to be poured forth from all Quarters on so interesting, so glorious an Event. Some, it is true, more penetrating and sagacious, wished to check this ardour of felicitating enthusiasm. “Before we rejoice”, said they, “with a People for having obtained their liberty, that is, *a power of doing what they please*, let us wait a moment, see how they will exercise this liberty, or *what they will be pleased to do*”—and the salutariness of this counsel has been but too well justified by the event. The transporting exclamation of others however, was, O Envable, O Wise and fortunate People—to effect that without bloodshed or confusion, in so easy and expeditious a manner which cost this Country the loss of so many Lives, and labour of so many Years !

But, alas !, how soon was the flattering Illusion to vanish ? How soon was the lofty voice of Exultation and Joy to be exchanged for the low murmurs of Mortification and Regret ? The placid Stream which by gentle swells might have diffused fertility and chearfulness on the adjacent soil, and afforded a prospect highly gratifying to the eye—became a rapid Torrent, whose tremendous Inundations bore

down every thing before them, and exhibited a Scene uniformly disgusting—a Scene of misery, devastation and ruin. No sooner had Heaven conferred on this People her most precious Boon, than they converted it into abuse against its Author. Considering the progress they had made, they might at least have paused awhile—they might have contemplated with gravity and awe the momentous work in which they were engaged—but they rushed on madly and precipitately; they bounded wantonly over all barriers in pursuit of a Phantom, which continued to elude their grasp. Instead of confining themselves to a prudent limitation or just regulation of the powers of the Monarch, they abolished Monarchy altogether. Instead of maturely examining into, and removing the defects of the ancient Structure, they inconsiderately pulled it at once to the ground—and attempted to raise another of such heterogeneous materials, that it would not form a solid and compact Mass; it tottered at the foundation, and threatened its Projectors with ruin. Under a pretence of acquiring new lights, and making new discoveries in the Moral World, they set at nought all the labours and researches of Antiquity. The settled Principles on which Civil Society had hitherto existed, in their rage for novelty they overturned. In establishing the Rights, they forgot the Dispositions of Man. Was Man naturally inclined to do what he ought, undoubtedly too great freedom of Action could not be allowed—but since the contrary is the case, since it has been found that Men left to their own Wills are prone to error and mischief, it has been admitted, that the only Parent of genuine Liberty, is rational Restraint—and that to secure the undisturbed possession of some Rights, a surrender of others must be made.

These Maxims, however, though dictated by Wisdom, and sanctioned by Experience, had no weight with our modern French Philosophers and Reformers. They opposed to them Principles that struck at the very root of all order and harmony in Society. They held

held a kind of preposterous and almost unintelligible jargon about the *Rights of Man*, and *Liberty and Equality*; Words implying (as far as could be learnt from the new ideas they affixed to them) that all Power was to rest in the hands of the People—so that all were ambitious of governing, and none would submit to be governed. If Delegates were appointed to propose and execute measures for the good of the whole, these Delegates were so overawed by the menaces of Faction, that the Populace in fact made Laws for themselves, and of course changed or violated them as caprice or interest prompted. The Consequences of such a System are too obvious to need much illustration. What became of Inviolability of Person, of Security of Property, and of Freedom of Opinion? Where there was no Law to inflict Punishment on Offenders—how could the Weak be protected against the attacks and encroachments of the Strong? When all rules of subordination, of obedience and respect were abolished—where was the source of Personal Safety? The terrified Citizen, far from regarding his House as his Fortress, found it subject to the incursions of a Sanguinary Mob. Instead of deriving confidence and support from his Neighbour, he saw Jealousy, Treachery and Suspicion lurk in every Eye. Trembling for his Person, seeing no Tribunals to which he could resort, he must submit quietly and without redress to any insults or injuries that might be offered him. Called to perform, perhaps, the most unjust and ungrateful Offices, his very Life might depend on the alacrity of his obedience.

And then, his Property, however laboriously or honestly obtained, could be no more regarded as his own—for how place stability or confidence in that, which lay at the mercy not of an absolute Monarch, but a body of Tyrants, whose very existence depended on reducing all ranks to a level with themselves? Without this levelling System, there could be no *liberty and equality*—Man had not his *just rights*—With it, all incitement to Industry was gone. The fruits of Diligence
and

and Economy could never be suffered to accumulate. The Indolent and Dissipated must have their share to preserve a just balance—for Riches would create power and influence, and power and influence are always fatal to Republican Rulers—their strength and safety lies in the weakness and inability of others to detect and depose them.

And, if such was the influence of tyranny in regard to the Persons and Property of Mankind, how could it be expected, but that the Press—that great Engine of Civil Liberty must be restricted and prostituted to the vilest and most infamous purpose, that of supporting the views and intrigues of the reigning Faction? In short, all the disorders and abuses that ever prevailed in the most Despotic Countries were introduced into *France* by this new Chimerical Government, this renovating, this illuminating System.

Such were its effects in regard to the happiness of Individuals. If we consider how it operated and distinguished them as a Nation or Body Politic, we shall find them instigated by the most unjustifiable Motives to perpetrate the most diabolical Actions. Under a pretence of Self-security, we find their Armies overrunning the territories of others, spreading carnage and desolation in their march; committing the grossest acts of oppression on the Inhabitants, subjugating them without mercy, infringing on their rights, plundering them of their stores—and to add insult to injury, telling them that all this was the effect of kindness and brotherly love—that they came to impose on them the Bonds of *Fraternity*, the acceptance of which or Death was the delightful Alternative—In other words, they had the distinguished privilege, of taking on them the Yoke of Slavery, or perishing by the Sword.

At home, we find Outrages of a still deeper die; Enormities still more unnatural. Multitudes of worthy and virtuous Citizens, after
seeing

seeing their property confiscated, were proscribed, driven from their Country, exposed to all the dangers and distresses of a state of exile—and that for no one transgression or offence, but because that more conscientious than their Oppressors, they would not openly renounce the *fear of God* and *honour of their King*. Thousands of others, who had not the good fortune to escape with the sacrifice of their all, after enduring the horrors of imprisonment and the agonizing prospect of their impending fate, fell under the indiscriminating hand of the hired Assassin. Neither Sex nor Condition, neither Beauty nor Grey Hairs, neither Virtue nor Accomplishments could arrest the vindictive blow—All, whose only crimes were their misfortunes, were involved in one promiscuous carnage.

At length, like those Beasts of prey who delight to riot in slaughter after the calls of appetite are satisfied, they fill up the *measure of their iniquity*, by an act—which the tongue hardly knows how to express, or the pen to record—an act, which in this Country filled every eye with a tear of pity, and made every heart glow with indignation—an act, in short, at which Human Nature seemed to stand aghast—as at something unheard of, unparalleled in the Annals of Mankind—for vain is it to compare it with that which disgraces the Page of our History, and at the recollection of which every true Patriot heaves a sigh. In point of Inhumanity and Injustice, the one disappears before the other—The differences between them are striking indeed. In the case of our *Charles*, direct violations of the People's rights were proved to have been committed, wilful Acts of usurpation were attempted to be justified; Regular Armies struggling on the one hand for Liberty and on the other for Prerogative, were drawn into the field—long and obstinate Battles were fought, and the blood of Friends and Relations slain, stimulated an infatuated People to fury and revenge. But in executing this revenge, though they exceeded the limits, they adhered to the forms of Justice. The solemnity of a fair and impartial

Trial was meant to be observed. A Tribunal was instituted for the purpose—and had not the sternness and inflexibility of the Monarch prevented him from degrading his Royal Dignity—had he so far condescended as to have acknowledged the Tribunal, and have answered the accusations laid to his charge—No one can positively assert, (whatever he may presume) but that an acquittal might have followed, or at least his Life have been spared. But in despising the authority, he exasperated the rage of his Judges, chusing rather to suffer as a Man than give up his rights as a King.

Of the unfortunate Personage whose end we so lately deplored, it may be truly said that he was led like a *Lamb to the slaughter*. In no frame merely human was there ever found, perhaps, less *guile*. The very errors imputed to him, (for what Mortal is exempt from them ?) are of an amiable and conciliating cast. He is condemned for too much facility of disposition, for too great a proneness to yield to solicitation and acquiesce in advice. But in one of so exalted a degree, (it has been admitted on all hands) that never were the characteristic virtues of Charity and Humility more eminently conspicuous. No Acts of tyranny or oppression, no wanton exercise of the Prerogative delivered to him from his Ancestors, no open attempts nor secret machinations to extend its influence, were ever laid to his charge. No groans of innocently suffering Subjects ever assailed his ears. When the seeds of Discord were sown among his People—when the voice of Murmur and Discontent was heard, and signs of Insurrection began to appear—what method did he take to appease them ? Did he make use of arms instead of argument ? did he resort to force instead of persuasion ? did he silence the cries of his People by taking away their lives ?—Alas, how contrary his disposition ? how different his language ?—“*My People*”, says he, “*you are dissatisfied—What is it you want—more Liberty ? Come then, partake of my power—*”

I freely give it you,—all I ask in return is more of your Love"†. Instead of love—O base and detestable Ingratitude ! O cursed and inveterate Hatred !—*If an enemy had done him the dishonour he might have borne it—but they were the Children of his bosom, whom he had cherished and brought up !*—These were the very Persons who hurl him with fury from his Throne, consign him to all the horrors of a wretched Captivity, make him a Spectator of the agonies and distresses of a beloved Family—and not content with this, when destitute and forlorn, without Power, without a Friend, as unable as unwilling to do any one an injury—in violation of all order and justice—in contempt of the lamentations and entreaties of the most endearing Ties, they drag him inhumanly to the Block.

But here, My Brethren, let us pause—a Scene presents itself which makes us look up with adoration to the Dispensations of Providence—*Who so trusteth in the Lord, shall be strong in the power of his might*—And never was there a more illustrious instance afforded of the truth of this decree. The Enemies of *Louis* may cover him with ignominy on a Throne, but they cannot prevent his appearing with dignity on a Scaffold. *Their* hatred and persecution serve but to illustrate *his* magnanimity and glory. Unappalled at sight of the instrument of his death, regarding it as the passage from a temporal to an eternal Kingdom, with what heroic sentiments did not the efficacy of his faith and the consciousness of his virtues inspire him ? how nobly did he surmount the dread of dissolution ? loaded with insults, denied the last privilege allowed the meanest Malefactor, that of taking leave of the surrounding Crowd—in the midst of confusion, tumult and noise, He, (and perhaps, he alone) calm and collect-

† These are the Words he is said to have addressed the States General, assembled by his own desire ; and in another part of the same Speech, " I am", says he, " the best Friend of my People" ; on which the Audience shouted, " We believe it, and return your Friendship".—Alas, how dreadful the return they were ere long to make ?—See a *Short Account of the Character and Reign of LOUIS XVI.*—J. DOWNES, Strand.

ed, with his eyes fixed on Heaven, exclaims, "*I commend my soul to God—I forgive my Enemies—I die innocent*". With these words the Scene of his miseries is rolled up, his Soul takes its flight, and a lifeless trunk only is left to satiate the rage of his still relentless Enemies.* August but ill-fated Monarch! Accept this last tender tribute from Hearts, who though unknown to Thee, have sympathised in all thy Sufferings! Peace to thy departed Soul! Released from the bondage of human woe, Mayst Thou now be solaced in those realms of immortal bliss, where *the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest!* May all thy frailties and imperfections be more than atoned for by the accumulated load of thy Misfortunes! May the All-merciful Father have received Thee into his bosom! *Washed in the blood of the Lamb*, Mayst Thou now enjoy *that eternal and exceeding weight of glory*, which an Apostle of Salvation has assured us must infinitely surpass the most exquisite *sufferings of the present time*. Comforted with this hope, there, then, will we leave Thee—in possession of *fulness of joy and of pleasures for evermore*—and return to those Authors of the bloody deed, who with Consciences black as Hell, are now, perhaps, lifting up the Dagger against thy miserable, disconsolate, Relics—against—(Hear it all ye Kindreds of the Earth and be amazed!) the Sister, the Wife, the Children of a murdered King!—let us return, I say, to these Miscreants, but not to describe all the atrociousness of their infernal Villainy; for what language can be adequate to this?—but after consigning them to that *Righteous Judge to whom vengeance and recompense belongeth, and who will reward every one according as his works shall be*, let us see if as a Nation we can profit of their examples; if from their actions we can derive any inferences or establish any principles, which may serve as lights and guides to ourselves.

First

*It is well known that marks of indignity were shewn the Body on the Scaffold, and in its mode of interment.

First then, We learn from hence how dangerous and fatal may prove sudden Changes and Innovations in a State. *The beginning of strife,* says the Wise Man, *is as when one letteth out water. A Cloud no bigger than a Man's hand* may contain in its bosom the source of a Deluge—And when once the barriers are broken down, who knows how far the inundations may spread? When once the Reins are loosened and committed into the hands of a capricious and inconsiderate Multitude, who can be answerable for the extremes to which they may go, or the outrages they may commit? Had the Examples before us been told, on their first triumph in the enjoyment of liberty, that hereafter they would abuse it in perpetrating the most atrocious deeds, that they would massacre Thousands of their Fellow-Citizens, and imbrue their hands in the blood of their Sovereign—No doubt they would have startled with horror at the very idea, would have wreaked their vengeance, perhaps, on him who dared to suggest it—at least, they would have replied in the language of *Hazael*, “*thinkest thou, we are Dogs, that we should do such things?*” It is impossible for us to arrive at such a pitch of brutal ferocity”. The event, however, has shewn how little acquainted they were with their own hearts, how incapable they have been of restraining the fury of their passions.

Not, however, that from hence, I would lay it down as an invariable principle, that all alterations in a Government are useless, improper, and never to be attempted. Governments, like other human Institutions, must be subject to imperfections, to abuses and errors; and the sooner these are removed, and judicious regulations adopted in their place, the greater reason, no doubt, have we to rejoice—it is by repeated Changes and Revolutions that our Constitution has arrived at its present eminent degree of envy and glory. Much less would I be thought to insinuate, that the Government of *France* was not radically defective, or that the Rights of Man properly understood, did not demand in it a melioration or reform. But what I would

with strongly to impress on your minds is, that in regard to ourselves, in the present happy and prosperous State in which we are, the crude and visionary Plans of Juvenile Upstarts in Politics, however sincere may be their pretensions, are little worth attending to; but, that the most mature deliberation of the wisest and most experienced Heads is requisite to determine, whether *any* Reform would be productive of essential improvements, of such magnitude, as to warrant the exposing ourselves to the precariousness of novelty, and hazard of experiment—and if so, that the most exact circumspection should be applied both as to the time in which this Reform is to be introduced, to the measures by which it is to be pursued, and to the Persons that are to superintend its establishment. Above all, beware of those Characters of Ambition and Intrigue, who connected, perhaps, with the Common Enemy, under pretence of a seasonable and temperate Reform, entertain the most perfidious and malicious views—who wish to disturb the tranquility of the state—by propagating the most delusive Theories, to excite a spirit of disloyalty and sedition—And by substituting anarchy and confusion for discipline and order, to promote one general struggle for places of Power and Emolument. Of such *false Teachers*, I say, My Brethren, *beware*. *They may come to you in Sheep's clothing*; they may dazzle you by the brightness of their genius or the subtlety of their arguments; *but inwardly they are ravening Wolves*—their views are to aggrandize themselves, at the expense of your happiness.

Secondly, We see here the dreadful consequences of extinguishing a sense of religion in the Human Breast. If Revelation had been silent, Reason and Experience are sufficient to convince us, that Impiety must prove a Source of the greatest evils. The Scripture, however, abounds with the most terrible denunciations of the Almighty's Vengeance against those who forsake him. The miseries and disasters

alters that befel the Jews are all to be traced to this source. *They have forsaken my law—they have walked in the imagination of their own heart. And shall not I visit them for these things? saith the Lord; shall not my Soul be avenged on such a Nation as this?* Whereas we are told, that *it is Righteousness alone which exalteth a Nation*, that *Sin is a reproach to any People*, and that *the Mercy of God is extended only to those who love him and keep his commandments*. In fact, when once the foundations of revealed Religion are shaken, the political fabric must be in imminent danger—for all the ties of virtue and morality are loosened—all confidence in the intercourses of Society, all credit for national Stipulations or commercial Engagements is weakened—perfidy, suspicion, and deceit take place of candour, integrity and honour. In the case before us, the *French* might have beheld a Nation, who after having renounced the Errors and Absurdities of the Church of Rome, established for themselves a pure System of faith, which Reason and Revelation co-operated to strengthen and support. Instead, however, of imitating our example—instead of observing a due medium and fixing bounds to their revolutionary phrenzy—they plunged at once from one extreme to the other, from Superstition to Infidelity, from an idolatrous Adoration of the only true God to a sacrilegious Abolition of all his Ordinances and Statutes. Hence, was it strange that after caring no more for a Supreme Being or a state of future Retribution, they should *sin, as it were, with a cart-rope, and commit all iniquity with greediness?* Was it strange, that after bidding defiance to the power and authority of Heaven, they should throw off all allegiance to *Thrones and Principalities* on earth? Was it strange, that after having impiously abandoned their God, they should audaciously murder their King?—

Such, then, are the Characters—Barbarous Regicides, Infidels and Atheists—Plunderers and Assassins—Monsters in Philosophy—Savages in cruelty—Such are the Characters, against whom *Great-Britain* has

has been compelled to unsheath the Sword. Contented among ourselves, the Guardians of Harmony and Peace diffused their influence over this happy Isle. Enjoying in security the blessings around us, satisfied with the fruits of our industry and commerce, we triumphed undoubtedly, in the pre-eminence of our own Government, but we rejoiced not in the convulsions of others, nor sought to promote them by wanton aggression. We remembered the unjust and illiberal conduct of our Enemy to us when contending with our Colonies, but not with a view to imitation. We disdained to retaliate, or to take advantage of their intestine Commotions, to add to our own consequence and strength. We had a tear of compassion for their miseries, and a sense of abhorrence of their crimes, but we sought neither to aggravate the one, nor to take exemplary vengeance of the other. And for this rigid neutrality, this generous forbearance on our part, what was the requital? Studious efforts to disturb our repose by civil discord, insidious Manœuvres to excite tumults and insurrections, by holding up to the Imaginations of the vulgar the most captivating but most dangerous Theories, and by disseminating among them principles subversive of all harmony and subordination in Society. On the discovery of such Attempts, surely it was time to take the alarm. If we had any sense of our Duty, any regard for our Interests, any solicitude for our safety, it was impossible but that the indignation of *Britons* must be roused—and when the voice of Loyalty and Patriotism bursting from all quarters proclaimed to the Enemy the defeat of their Malice, what was their resource then, but to plunge us into all the calamities of a foreign War? Yes, My Brethren, I will not pretend to dissemble—the calamities of war are serious evils, in all cases highly to be deplored. Humanity always shudders at a contemplation of them. Eloquence cannot seize on a more energetic topic to agitate the heart—And were I to represent to you in pathetic colours, some of their consequences—the lonely Orphan—the weeping

ing Widow—the desponding Parent—were I to transport you to the Theatre of action, and make you Spectators of the hardships and fatigues, the extremes of Cold and Heat, the severities of Hunger and Thirst, which some experience—the agonies, the lingering pains, and excruciating torments of others, wounded and dying—Were I to enter into a detail, I say, and expatiate on such subjects, I might harrow up your feelings—and your compassion overpowering your reason, I might induce you, perhaps, to leave this place dissatisfied with the measures, and deprecating the war in which we are engaged. But should any Pulpit be this day dedicated to such a purpose, it is our duty to expose to you the artifice, and guard against its mischief. The Questions, My Brethren, by you to be considered, are, Can War in any case be justified on the plea of necessity? And if a negative was never yet given to this question, does such necessity exist at the present juncture? Does it? What is the war in which we are engaged? It has been said by some to be a war against Opinions, and that Opinions were never known to be extirpated by fire and sword—But what? Is the subversion of all authority and order, the violation of solemn Compacts and Treaties, the profanation of every thing sacred and august? Is the perpetration of the most unnatural crimes, the deliberate massacre of thousands of helpless Victims, the horrible murder of an amiable and benevolent Sovereign? Are these, I say, matters of opinion? Would to God, that to the eternal disgrace of this enlightened Era, they were not Facts, lamentable, incontrovertible Facts. If, then, such facts be the result of certain opinions, and if the Authors of these opinions, far from retracting them and acknowledging their error, still wish to propagate them, to see a repetition of the same disastrous scenes, to spread desolation and carnage in other Countries as in their own—Shall we not labour to bring such Persons to a proper sense of their Duty—or exterminate them and their opinions? Shall we not labour to restore Reason to her just rights, and place Religion

once more on her Throne ? Still once, what is the war in which we are engaged ? It is not to consolidate an interest in a lately discovered Country—it is not to substantiate the advantages of a newly acquired Commerce—it is not to revenge a National insult, to guaranty a Treaty, or bring under the yoke a few misguided and rebellious Colonies—all these are cases in which our Fleets have traversed the ocean, and Armies have been drawn into the field—and on the expediency of which, Men have been divided in opinion, without any imputation on their understanding or their integrity. But the cause in which we are now embarked, embraces a much more extensive scale, involves a much more momentous concern. It is the cause of Human Nature at large, of the noblest Principles in the breast of Man, of Justice, Rectitude and Innocence—it is the cause of the most invaluable blessings, the dearest privileges we possess, our Liberty, Property, and Independance—it is the cause of all that Peace, Comfort and Satisfaction we enjoy in the circles of domestic Society—it is the cause of our holy religion, our Churches and Altars, our present faith, and future hope—in one word, it is the cause of GOD and JESUS CHRIST—Shall we not then glory in being Instruments of the Vengeance of the Most High ? Need I urge any thing more to persuade you to a unanimous vigour and perseverance ? Shall we relax ? Shall we murmur or be dispirited on account of the necessary consequences of every War, a few trifling additional imposts, or a few temporary embarrassments in the way of Commerce ? Shall we not rather aspire to views more noble, to principles more disinterested ? disdaining objects of such paltry consideration, shall we not kindle a patriotic flame in our bosoms, and call on each other *to fight for our Brethren, our Sons, and our Daughters, our Wives and our Houses*—And I may add, our future generations ?—for the interests of Posterity are deeply involved in this contest—on our present conduct, will depend their everlasting Blessings or Curses.

But whilst as Men, we imitate *Nehemiah*, and stimulate each other
to.

to a spirit of resolution and bravery—let us not as Christians, overlook his example in another respect—he *remembers the Lord, great and terrible*—he derives all his confidence and strength from above—nay, we find that previous to his giving this exhortation, he had *wept, and mourned, and fasted and prayed*. Let us, then, like him, never forget that it is *the Lord great and terrible, the God of Heaven alone that can tread down our Enemies—that without him vain is the help of Man—that except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain*.

Impressed with these sentiments, let us, in the next place, by fasting and praying, as he did, fulfil punctually the duties of this solemn Day.—Let us examine our consciences, repent of our past sins, implore forgiveness of them with contrition, form earnest resolutions of amendment—And in our articles of supplication to the Throne of Grace, let us not forget even our Enemies. Let us entreat the Almighty to give them a *new heart, and a right spirit*—to restore them *to the Houshold of faith*—And, as far as can be reconciled to Divine Justice, to alleviate even the calamities which they have brought down on their own heads. When, My Brethren, we shall be thus disposed, we may rest assured that success will crown our efforts. The Victories already gained by our Allies—the miserably distracted and desponding state of our Enemy are proofs that the God of Battles has hitherto supported our arms—And we may, therefore, hope, that, if we are not wanting to ourselves, in a speedy restoration of tranquillity and peace, *the Lord of Hosts will still be with us, the God of Jacob will be our refuge.*

F I N I S.

ERRATA

Page 5, line last—for, of state, read, *of the state*.—Page 9, line 2, from the bottom—for, and afforded, read, *and have afforded*.—Page 12, line 4—for, Rupublican, read, *Republican*.—Page 21, line 14—for, never yet given, read, *never yet proved in answer*.

to a spirit of religion and piety—let us not as Christians overlook
his example in another respect—he was a man of a great and
right—he derives all his confidence and strength from above—may we
find that previous to his giving this exhortation, he had with
separated, and asked and prayed. Let us then, like him, never forget
that it is the Lord that and through the God of Heaven that can
break down our barriers—let us not then, in the midst of his
great work the Lord has the City, the wilderness, and the sea.

Improve with this confidence, let us in the next place, boldly
and praying, as he did, still gradually the doors of his kingdom
—let us examine our consciences, reject of our past sins, improve
the goodness of them with confidence, form new resolutions of
improvement—let us in our studies of English history, the history of
Greece, let us encourage our own knowledge—let us search the
mighty to let them be a source of a new power—to make them
to the knowledge of the Lord—let us then, as we are called to this
justly, and let us on the other hand, which we have brought down
on their own heads. When we then, we shall be able to
we may well expect that the Lord will show us the way. The
already gained by our faith—the Lord will show us the way and deliver
line of our duty, and the Lord will show us the way and deliver
pointed our way—let us then, as we are called to this
leading to our work, let us then, as we are called to this



THE END